

- 241 of people who for the past years were subjected to the ravages of famine and scarcity conditions. There was enough grain and to spare for exportation. The opening of Banihal Cart Road which is the one all-State route connecting the two provinces of Jammu and Kashmir was the greatest work of the decade. The health was generally good save in the Jammu district where Plague caused much mortality. In 1981 the condition was practically the same but there was no epidemic while in 1982 the general economic condition was slightly better owing to the general fall in the prices of cloth, sugar, tea and salt which are the main commodities for which the remainder is dependent on the market. The higher prices of food stuffs also brought gain to the agriculturist. There was not much improvement in 1983 excepting the slight rise in prices of food grains.

Kashmir Province.—In Kashmir the year 1980 was responsible for good harvests, high wages, absence from epidemics, decrease in forced labour, flourishing condition of people and prohibition of import of Shali into Srinagar and permission for its export to British India by Private Agencies. In 1981 with the exception of a Cholera outbreak the province had fair harvests, nice weather and good economic conditions which but for the feebly outbreaks of Cholera and Plague in 1982 were well maintained during 1982 and 1983.

Frontier Districts.—But for a mild attack of Influenza in Gilgit, the year 1980 proved to be a healthy year being free from disease and attended with satisfactory conditions. The people no doubt are generally poor which is due not only to the labour being unskilled and unable to fetch high wages but want of any industry or a brisk trade, the whole population being engaged in agriculture which unfortunately has no further land for expansion. The remaining years 1981, 1982 and 1983 were normal.

● 325 *Faali year 1984-85.*—It is necessary to explain here the fact that His Highness' Government ordered the abandonment of the old Bikram year and adoption in its stead of the Faali year which commences with the seventh month of the Bikram year namely on 1st of Katik and closes with the month of Aasi. The first Faali year 1984-85 started with the 1st of Katik 1984 (about the middle of October) and is represented in duplicate figures as shown above and consequently the conditions for the years after 1983 are represented by the Faali years instead of Bikrami years.

- 731 *Monsoon of the Summer.*—The years 1984-85 proved very inauspicious for Kashmir Province as the unprecedented and heavy rain falling incessantly for well over two days brought disastrous floods which besides flooding the valley inflicted terrible destruction on crops and cattle alike. All communications with the outside world were cut off and the Kashmir valley was for several days completely isolated. Although the crops in Muzaffarabad district did not, on account of high elevation, suffer so much from floods as through excessive rainfall yet the washing away of the Kishenganga and Domel bridges by the unprecedented floods both in the Jhelum and the Kishenganga rivers brought about a serious dislocation of the trade of the district by cutting off the transport communications between Abbottabad and Domel. During the winter when the snows block the Murree road all traffic between Srinagar and the Punjab is diverted to this road which is free from snow throughout the year but loss of the above two bridges rendered the use of this route by wheeled traffic impossible. The bridges have, however, been reconstructed now in 1932 i.e., after a year of their destruction and consequently this period was not favourable for the flow of the trade of this district. The tehsils of Muzaffarabad district continued under the Settlement operations. The province was free from epidemic diseases but for the Small-Pox outbreak in Srinagar city in 1985 resulting in 1,008 deaths.

The annual Amarnath pilgrimage started in good weather from Srinagar but was overtaken by heavy incessant rains accompanied by snows in high altitudes. [Errata: read "free" for "free"; (A. errata sheet, A. 329, category 116 -- Analysis)]

^{x 659}
^{x [805]} 113. *Accuracy of the Age-return.*—Of all the questions asked for the purpose of filling in the Census Schedules, that pertaining to age is generally attended with dubious results. The ordinary villager who has received practically no education is not only ignorant of his actual age but on account of traditional reticence he would not give away his correct age to any outsider even if he knew it. There is a tendency to declare a higher age than he has actually reached. The timely issue of printed circulars and verbal instructions to the Census agency enjoining upon them the necessity of exercising a strict and careful check on the entries of age column went a long way in securing a reliable return of age but still the mistakes which are inherent to this enquiry may have played their part though to a smaller extent. It is accordingly not possible to assert that the returns of age have reached the ideal accuracy which must needs elude the grasp of many a Census till the percentage of literacy of the rural population is considerably increased and the wholesome effects of widespread education and enlightenment have broken the weakening cords of superstition and traditional reticence of the masses who at present do not fully realise the value of the Census statistics. The principal causes responsible for inaccuracy of the age-return have already received sufficient comment in the previous Census Reports but to enable the reader to correctly appraise the figures it is essential to review them briefly here also.

802 1. An average person shows a special preference for stating his age in numbers which end in zero or which are multiples of 5 and it is rare that he states the intervening numbers unless he is challenged or persistently interrogated. There is a further preference for even over odd numbers.

2. No acute distinction is made in their minds by people in giving the ages of children; and children from two months upto two years or over may be inadvertently clubbed together in the category of 0-1 age-period.

581 3. Amongst the Hindu parents there is a strong proclivity to understate the age of unmarried girls for fear of social obloquy, while on the other hand there is some overstatement in the ages of young boys who are pushed into premature manhood.

4. In middle-life, the understatement is greater in case of males than the females since amidst the former there is a large number of bachelors or widowers who can best promote their object of securing wives by appearing of a younger age while the latter who are generally married do not stand to gain much by the lie.

562 5. The tendency so marked amongst the Western women to understate their age, does not find much favour among the Indian women who on account of social restrictions such as *Purdah* system etc., have little chance to move out in society and consequently feel little temptation towards understatement.

888 6. The tendency to materially exaggerate their age amongst the old people is very common in India and any old man after he has crossed eighty is apt to declare himself a centenarian, and it is not unoften that to inspire belief in others he relates old incidents which he proudly states as having occurred and been seen by him when he was a boy.

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 562 7. Another element of error is introduced by the fact that the enumerator has to make enquiries from the head of the family who has to answer questions not only for himself but also for dependent residents. He might remember with somewhat exactness the ages of his sons but the ages of women who observe *purdah* can only be roughly declared by him and it should be no surprise if sometimes the error of 5 years or even a decade creeps in.

^{x 659} The inaccuracies due to the above factors were partly guarded against by previous training of the enumerators and the vigilance of the checking staff, and partly by adjustment effected in the statistics by subjecting the crude figures